

RURAL-INCLUSION e-Government Lowering Administrative Burdens for Rural Businesses



ICT for Government
and Public Services



Rural Inclusion aims at adopting a state-of-art infrastructure (i.e. modelling approach and software environment) that will facilitate the offering of innovative services by public administration in rural areas. More specifically, the objective is to address a longstanding challenge by public administrations: reducing the administrative burden of enterprises in rural areas, by reducing the information elicitation process of businesses when they want to use a particular instance of some public service, or making more effective use of the resources.

At a Glance

Project

Rural Inclusion

Project coordinator

Atos Origin Sociedad Anonima Española, ES

Participants

Centre Européen d'Education Permanente, FR
Communauté de Communes Nord Martinique, FR
Greek Research and Technology Network, GR
EllinoGermaniki Agogi Scholi Panagea Savva AE, GR
Chios Chamber of Commerce, GR
Centre for Research and Technology Hellas, GR
Agricultural University of Athens, GR
Technologiju Attistibas Forums, LT
National University of Ireland, Galway, IR
Baltic Open Solutions Center, LT
Groupement Hippique International, FR
Servicio Riojano de Empleo, ES

Funding

Information and Communication Technologies -
ICT-PSP.2008.1.2 - Reduction of Administrative
Burdens across the EU

Total Cost

€4.80m (EU Contribution: €2.40m)

Execution date

From 01/06/2009 to 31/05/2012

Project status

Running

Contract type

ICT Policy Support Programme Pilot Type B

Rural Inclusion will adopt, adapt and deploy a web infrastructure combining semantic services with a collaborative training and networking approach, in the rural setting of five European regions. It will focus on selected case studies of e-Government services that regional public authorities already offer, support them by a rigorous and reusable service process analysis and modelling, and then deploy a semantic service that facilitates the disambiguation of the small businesses needs and requirements when trying to use the particular services. At the same time, the semantic service will be complemented by a number of other web-based services that support the creation of communities of learning and practice in rural settings, thus facilitating the communication between the rural businesses with the regional public authorities.

The adopted technical infrastructure has been developed and initially deployed in the context of previous initiatives in which project partners have been involved. In the Rural Inclusion project, this infrastructure will be used as the basis to set up or (enhance) e-Government portals of regional public agencies. Therefore, the owner, provider and maintainer of the service will be the regional public authorities themselves, who will adopt and integrate the proposed services.

The envisaged potential users of the deployed regional portals will be Small & Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) in five European rural regions in central Spain, the Greek islands, rural Latvia, rural France and overseas, in the region of Martinique. In cooperation with public authorities and/or professional associations of SMEs in each participating user country, a number of pilot demonstrators will be deployed and assessed. In addition, extended validation trials will follow with more user partners that will be invited to join the project and test its results.

Objectives

The objectives of the Rural Inclusion project are the following:

- to analyse the administrative burdens that SMEs in rural areas are currently facing, and identify public services that could be provided through e-Government.
- to identify, through various workshops with all involved stakeholders (such as public administration representatives, SME associations, technology providers, etc.), the needs that SMEs in the targeted rural areas have, as well as the administrative burdens that they face when interacting with public administration on a regional or national level.
- to select a number of case study public services in each user country, and to follow an analysis and modelling approach that will lead to the semantic analysis and ontological representation of their stages, criteria, requirements, and outcomes.
- to deploy a number of innovative e-Government services that will complement the provision of the selected public services, and will facilitate the interaction between the rural SMEs and the regional authorities, through a semantic disambiguation of needs and requirements.
- to adopt and implement an innovative approach for the training of both staff of the regional public agencies and SME communities on the use of the deployed e-Government services, aiming at a cultural change towards the use of online public services.
- to set up and run a number of Living Labs demonstrators to facilitate the creation of communities of learning and practice of rural stakeholders, cultivating a lifelong learning oriented digital culture, so that people in rural areas adopt, adapt and invent solutions for their specific circumstances, in a continuous sustainable route towards capacity building in the rural communities. The goal is to have these Rural Living Labs remain active even after the project funding, becoming thus regional innovation poles facilitating the cooperation between regional public authorities and SMEs.
- to promote the active exchange of experiences between the project's communities and other rural communities, on the topic of how regional web portals may offer semantic e- Government services to reduce administrative burdens in rural areas.
- to promote the approach in designing, deploying and engaging Rural Living Labs that will create a continuous dialogue and consultation around public administration services.
- to disseminate the analysis tools, methodologies, software services and implementation approach of the project, on both a national and an EU level.
- to transfer and exploit the gained experience, the produced methodologies and proposed solutions, in respect of a set of burden reduction good practices through effective e-Government services.

Further information

Rural Inclusion website: <http://www.rural-inclusion.eu/>

eGovernment: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/index_en.htm

ICT PSP: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/index_en.htm

Information Society thematic Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/index_en.htm

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